

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY East Germany/Austria

DATE DISTR. 28 June 1955

SUBJECT Austrian Report on the 1955
Leipzig Spring Fair

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2. [] the over-all results of the Fair fell far short of success. The turnover of goods remained considerably behind that of the 1954 Leipzig Fall Fair. The high hopes of foreign exhibitors, whose number had nearly doubled as a result of the favorable reports of the Fall Fair, were not fulfilled. []

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[] the failure of the Fair primarily to the following three reasons:

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a. A depressed atmosphere at the Fair caused by unsettled world conditions, particularly the effects of West German rearmament.

b. An East German error in judgment in reviving the traditional Leipzig Spring Fair. The East German authorities failed to take into account basic changes which have occurred since the war. For one thing, the old German free economy has been replaced by a centrally planned economy. In the second place, the majority of East German trade now is carried on within the sphere of the Soviet Bloc. In addition, it is of significance that these states all draw up their yearly economic plan in early fall. Consequently, by the following spring, these countries have no more room in their import plans for additional purchases, unless special goods are needed to fill a gap or cover an unforeseen requirement. This, [] is the barrier that foreign exhibitors ran up against during the first postwar Leipzig Spring Fair.

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c. The East German switch in emphasis from consumer goods to heavy industry, with major emphasis on raw materials, in conformance with recent Soviet directives.

3. [] in contrast to most foreign exhibitors, the Austrian firms at the Leipzig Fair reported surprisingly good sales. The main East German interest was concentrated on the large steel firms, like Alpine Montan, Boehler, and Schoeller-Bleckmann. The firm of Ing. Othmar Ruthner, with plants in Vienna

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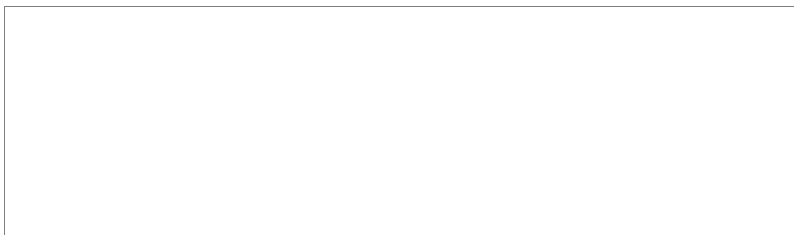


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Voesendorf and Waidhofen a.d. Ybbs, did good business in technical industrial installations with East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Ing. Friedrich Pongracz, Hallergasse 31-33, Vienna XI, found East German, Czech, and Hungarian representatives keenly interested in his automatic steel press. The M.A.W. Maschinen, Apparate und Werkzeugfabrik, Vienna XIV, expects to sell \$200,000 worth of gas-station pumps to East Germany.

4. Other Austrian articles for which East Germany showed serious interest were valves, packing discs, coupling lining, band steel, industrial measuring instruments, chains, electric temperature regulators, microphones, and radio accessories. It is also noteworthy that Austrian wines are to be exported to East Germany for the first time; an initial order for 750,000 schillings is expected.



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